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Culture of peace

Promotion of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the activities that have been carried out by the main United Nations entities working in the areas of a culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace since the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolutions 68/125 and 68/126.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is presented in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 68/125, on the follow-up to the Declaration and Plan of Action on a Culture of Peace, and 68/126, on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace. This is the first time that a combined report has been submitted covering the implementation by the United Nations system of the two resolutions.

2. The rationale for streamlining the documentation submitted under the agenda item "Culture of peace" lies in the fact that reports have increasingly addressed activities relevant to both resolutions, leading to repetition. The end of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and the new focus adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), including the adoption of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), have also contributed to increased proximity between the culture of peace and the intercultural and interreligious agendas. Adopting a single reporting framework was recommended in the reports submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (see A/68/286, para. 87, and A/68/216, para. 61).

3. The present report contains contributions received from a wide range of United Nations entities whose mandates are directly focused on or contribute to peace and dialogue.

II. Leading role of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the implementation of its programme of action for a culture of peace and non-violence and the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures

4. UNESCO continues to capitalize on its programme of action for a culture of peace and non-violence as well as the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), with a view to actively engaging partners in the fostering of mutual understanding and dialogue.

Promotion of peace and mutual understanding through education

5. UNESCO promotes values, attitudes and behaviours that foster responsible global citizenship, through effective educational responses to contemporary challenges. A focus is placed on programmes and projects to help instil tolerance and understanding among diverse groups, cultures and religions. This is consistent with the goals of the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative, for which UNESCO is hosting the secretariat, and with the UNESCO global citizenship education framework. Under the latter, UNESCO assists its member States in integrating global citizenship education into national education systems; creating open dialogue, such as the first UNESCO Forum on Global Citizenship Education (Bangkok, December 2013); and providing conceptual clarity and guidance, such as in the publication "Global citizenship education: preparing learners for the challenges of the 21st century".

6. UNESCO also enhances peace and human rights education. The preparation of the plan of action for the third phase of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and the development of a joint curriculum reform resource pack are important ongoing tasks. The monitoring of the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms is noteworthy as part of this research. It maintains a normative framework for shared values and principles of human rights in and through education. The latest report on the implementation of this recommendation[1] builds on a consultation initiated in 2013 to which 57 member States responded.

7. UNESCO contributes to the revision or adaptation of curricula, school textbooks and other learning materials to remove cultural, religious and gender-based stereotypes, in particular as part of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue,[2] supported by Saudi Arabia. Likewise, the "Teaching Respect for All" project, supported by Brazil and the United States of America, promotes universal principles and values based on human rights to counter all forms of discrimination and violence. In this context, the publication entitled "Teaching Respect for All implementation guide" is a useful new tool. Assessing education policies and the realities of "learning to live together" from a regional perspective helps to measure school needs in order to meet the challenges of our diverse societies, as outlined in a synthesis report issued by UNESCO and based on data collected in 10 countries in Asia and the Pacific.[3]

8. In addition, language education deserves full attention as an enabling factor with respect to achieving education for all. Language ability is undoubtedly gaining in importance in a globalized and culturally diverse world. This strengthens the UNESCO position with regard to promoting "multilingual education", a term adopted in 1999 to refer to the use of at least three languages: the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language in education. This linguistic and cultural diversity contributes to creativity, innovation and social inclusion, as celebrated during International Mother Language Day (21 February). In 2014, events were organized in cooperation with the International Organization of la Francophonie focusing on "Local languages for global citizenship: spotlight on science".[4] An international conference on "Enhancing language ability and education for the twenty-first century" was organized in Suzhou, China (4-6 June 2014), in partnership with the Government of China.

9. Furthermore, UNESCO uses the transformative power of education to deepen knowledge about tragic chapters of human history, in order to protect present and future generations from ignorance and/or obfuscation that might lead to a repetition of the same horrors. In this regard, the UNESCO Holocaust Education Programme includes policy design and awareness-raising, capacity development and advocacy work. An international seminar entitled "The impact of holocaust education: how to assess policies and practices?" was organized by UNESCO, as were special events

[1] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002241/224137e.pdf.

[2] See http://peace-dialogue.org/en.

[3] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002272/227208E.pdf.

[4] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/international-mother-language-day-2014/.

on the commemoration of the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide during the corresponding International Days.

10. UNESCO is also pioneering an educational and cultural initiative, the Slave Route Project, which supports research and raises awareness regarding the history of the slave trade, slavery and their consequences. "Breaking the silence", highlighting the resulting cultural interactions and promoting shared heritage remain important. The label "site of memory associated with the UNESCO Slave Route Project", awarded to such historical sites as the Quay of Valongo (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), contributes to this. Valuing the contributions of the enslaved peoples to modern multicultural societies is important, especially in the context of the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures. The celebration in 2014 of the twentieth anniversary of the Slave Route Project[5] enhanced the global reflection on this history, promoted reconciliation efforts and assisted in the design of tools and approaches for the management of new forms of identity emerging from this past. Initiatives are taking place throughout the world, particularly around dedicated observance dates (i.e., 25 March and 23 August).

11. In helping to shape the post-2015 follow-up agenda, UNESCO urges all Governments to invest more in quality and inclusive education, as well as lifelong learning, as accelerators of development and enablers of more peaceful societies, as reflected in the Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013-2014, *Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All*. This is also the organization's case for making global citizenship education one of the targets of the education goal in the post-2015 development agenda.

Developing new policies and tools for addressing social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence

12. Today's ongoing and profound social transformations have created an unprecedented demand for social cohesion, inclusion and intercultural dialogue. In this context, UNESCO is addressing key emerging concerns, including the role of young people as agents of change, citizens' participation in the consolidation of democracy and the ethical implications of sustainable development. In that effort, more room is being given to the organization's future-oriented and anticipatory function as a global laboratory of ideas for designing innovative proposals and assisting its member States in the formulation and review of public policies.

13. Through its Management of Social Transformations (MOST) Programme, UNESCO encourages decision makers to design and implement inclusive, innovative, culturally sensitive and rights-based public policies that foster social inclusion and intercultural dialogue. The UNESCO International Coalition of Cities against Racism and Discrimination remains an active network that promotes a policy orientation of inclusiveness at the municipal level and serves as a good platform for awareness-raising during the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March). UNESCO also seeks to use sport as a powerful vehicle for delivering those messages, including through the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (6 April), first held in 2014.[6] The International

[5] See http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002284/228475e.pdf.

[6] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/international-day-of-sport-for-development-and-peace-2014/.

Day of Peace (21 September) also remains a strategic moment for reflection and awareness-raising.

14. Empowering and integrating global youth efforts in this field are critical steps, and the UNESCO Youth Forum provides a unique opportunity in that regard. As a concrete outcome of the eighth UNESCO Youth Forum (October 2013), the new Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021)[7] was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its thirty-seventh session. In parallel, regular platforms for youth dialogue and actions are provided, including at the international conference on "Youth volunteering and dialogue" held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (December 2013), and the Networks of Mediterranean Youth project, implemented with the financial support of the European Union and aimed at strengthening active participation by youth in the development of their communities and their involvement in the decision-making process. The upcoming Pan-African Youth Forum for a Culture of Peace, to be held in Libreville (13-14 December 2014), is guided by similar objectives.

15. In the same context, the work of the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador Forest Whitaker is important. It comprises the peacebuilding "Harmonizer" programme, launched in Mexico and aimed at vulnerable youth experiencing the aftermath of violence and conflict, and the Youth Peacemaker Network, initiated in South Sudan to support the peace and reconciliation process, with a focus on youth and former soldiers. The contributions of women to the fostering of dialogue among cultures need to be highlighted and fully supported, as emphasized in the new UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Action Plan (2014-2021).

16. UNESCO has renewed its efforts to foster a culture of peace and dialogue in Africa. In the operational strategy adopted in November 2013 by the General Conference for the Priority Africa programme of the organization, a culture of peace was designated as one of the main pillars of its activities in the region during the period 2014-2021. UNESCO has accelerated the momentum created for a culture of peace by the "Make Peace Happen" campaign, which originated as a result of the conclusions and recommendations of the Pan-African Forum entitled "Sources and resources for a culture of peace", held in Luanda in 2013. Since the creation in September 2013 at Addis Ababa of a network of foundations and research institutions for the promotion of a culture of peace, UNESCO has, in partnership with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, prepared for the launch of its activities in the context of a conference, held on the International Day of Peace 2014 in Yamoussoukro, celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the birth in that city of the concept of a culture of peace.

17. In March 2014, UNESCO and a number of partners undertook an initiative to launch a women's network to promote a culture of peace in Africa. With respect to youth, UNESCO has begun working in collaboration with the Government of Gabon to establish a youth network with the same goal, to be launched in Libreville in December 2014. This platform for dialogue will operate as a youth-owned social network.

[7] See http://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/Operational%20Strategy%20on%20Youth%202014-2021.pdf.

Media and information literacy as a catalyst for intercultural dialogue for peace

18. Media and information technologies, including social media, have become paramount tools for connecting people and allowing dialogue to take place peacefully. Because the advancement of media and information literacy and intercultural dialogue is vital in this endeavour, UNESCO continues to enable journalism training institutions, including relevant non-governmental organizations, to incorporate those topics into their activities. The objective is to upgrade the skills of young researchers and journalists to guard them against bias in the gathering and reporting or dissemination of news and information. To this end, the International University Network on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations helps to promote further reflection on the design of training modules and policy guidelines targeting young people to facilitate culturally diverse reporting.

19. The recently issued UNESCO publication *Media and Information Literacy Policy and Strategy Guidelines* is focused on how citizens and media professionals can use media and information literacy to promote communication practices that are sensitive to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

20. The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Youth Training on Media and Civic Participation, organized in Bali, Indonesia (21-28 August 2014), was a timely opportunity for the sharing of experiences on the culture of peace through the media and developing practical action plans. UNESCO is developing an interactive e-portal to provide young people with access to information and literature, and to develop e-courses on enhancing intercultural skills with the possibility of sharing experiences through a virtual forum dedicated to the culture of peace in everyday life. The portal also highlights the activities and results of all the projects carried out in the context of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue, with the long-term intent of including all the work accomplished by UNESCO in this area.

21. All these actions require full respect for freedom of expression and media freedom, which involves the safety of journalists. This is why UNESCO spearheaded the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity,[8] based on a multi-stakeholder approach to the creation of a free and safe environment for journalists and media workers in both conflict and non-conflict situations.

Promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue for mutual understanding and peace

22. In increasingly diverse and interconnected societies, peaceful coexistence is no longer enough. Cultural and religious differences are at the forefront. People need to be equipped with the capacities necessary to thwart hate speech, challenge stereotypes and promote the peaceful coexistence in diversity and with respect for human rights. For UNESCO, the major aim of interreligious dialogue, which forms part of broader intercultural dialogue, is to enhance understanding between non-believers and believers, as well as between individuals and leaders of different

[8] See http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/safety-of-journalists/un-plan-of-action/.

religions, faiths and convictions, with a view to increasing mutual knowledge about spiritual traditions and their underlying values.

23. To achieve greater impact in this endeavour, reinforcing partnerships among key actors is fundamental. UNESCO renewed its memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in September 2013 and signed a memorandum of understanding with the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in May 2014. This is consistent with the organization's active involvement in other forums, such as the Baku Process, culminating every two years in the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, and debates related to the World Public Forum "Dialogue of Civilizations". In this context, as part of the Euro-Arab Dialogue initiative, UNESCO organized, in cooperation with the MBI Al Jaber Foundation, a conference entitled "Euro-Arab dialogue: our commonly shared values" (Algarve, Portugal, 25-26 November 2013), with a similar event planned in October 2014. A number of new concrete flagship activities will be needed to effectively address the rise in intolerance and extremism. The upcoming launch of phase II of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Programme for a Culture of Peace and Dialogue will further support UNESCO work in this area. A portfolio including guidelines and training tools is under development and will support capacity-building.

24. The normative framework of UNESCO also provides a unique global platform for dialogue, having established a holistic cultural governance system as part of a human-rights-based approach. As such, the implementation of the organization's cultural instruments and programmes engages States in dialogue and cooperation. This is also advanced through dedicated UNESCO programmes such as the General and Regional Histories, in particular the official presentation by the UNESCO Director-General of *The Foundations of Islam* (Vol. I), part of the UNESCO series entitled "The "Different Aspects of Islamic Culture", which took place on 10 June 2014, together with the joint UNESCO-Simon Wiesenthal exhibition "People, book, land: the 3,500-year relationship of the Jewish people with the Holy Land". Furthermore, awarding the 2013-2014 UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture to the Arab Image Foundation (Lebanon) and Farouk Mardam-Bey (France) drew attention to the contributions of Arab and Islamic culture to the general progress of humanity.

25. Strategic projects such as "The Pedagogical Use of the *General History of Africa*", with the launch in 2014 of the preparation of its Volume IX, on Africa and its Diaspora, and the Silk Road Online Platform, with the establishment of a network of focal points from all the countries along the "Silk Roads", as well as the "Cross-Reading of Human History" project, are designed to further highlight the interactions, exchanges and mutual influences in the fields of science and technology from the early eighth to the sixteenth century.

26. The protection of heritage sites and institutions in conflict situations is critical to safeguarding identities and sources of livelihood, which are, in turn, essential for reconciliation. UNESCO has further strengthened its actions to safeguard heritage sites in sensitive areas of the world through its various cultural conventions, with concentrated efforts in Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali), where the mausoleums destroyed by extremists in 2013 are being reconstructed. UNESCO is also working in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic to safeguard affected sites, counter the illicit trafficking of cultural properties and raise

the awareness and build the capacities of the relevant authorities. The importance of heritage protection in all humanitarian and peacekeeping operations of the United Nations system is now central to UNESCO advocacy work in this area.

27. These efforts echoed the organization's work to promote culture and development in the post-2015 agenda. Although culture was absent from the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, country-level evidence and recognition at the global level have since highlighted the role and impact of culture in the drive for sustainable development. The Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies (2013) thus called for the full integration of culture into the post-2015 development agenda through clear goals, targets and indicators.

The way forward: promoting a culture of peace and the rapprochement of cultures

28. A lasting peace and respect for the rule of law are more than freedom from violence or the enforcement of formal procedures. They must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind, as stipulated in the Constitution of UNESCO. Fostering such solidarity requires that decision makers work jointly with civil society, placing a strong emphasis on values, attitudes and behaviours conducive to a culture of peace. A renewed commitment of the international community to these values is essential, especially because conflicts today frequently and insidiously mobilize cultural targets and religious identities. It is therefore imperative to promote cultural pluralism at all levels, highlighting the close links among cultural diversity, dialogue, development, security and peace.

29. The International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), for which UNESCO is the lead agency in the United Nations system, is a relevant mobilizing framework for action that promotes synergy. At its 194th session, in 2014, the Executive Board of UNESCO adopted the Action Plan for the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022). The Action Plan offers a strong opportunity to ensure a renewed focus on intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace, with the engagement of all relevant actors, while placing emphasis on the involvement of young women and men in global conversations.

30. Several Member States have committed to carrying out activities in these areas, with a first implementation report to be presented to the Executive Board of UNESCO at its 197th session, in 2015. Furthermore, UNESCO intends to formulate new frameworks and activities for mobilization to further engage relevant stakeholders, including sister United Nations agencies and the network of UNESCO Chairs and other actors. A key aim is to creatively adapt policy frameworks to address challenges that are jeopardizing the cohesion and peaceful coexistence of humankind.

III. United Nations Alliance of Civilizations: concretizing the orientation towards prevention and reconciliation

31. During the reporting period, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations conducted a strategic review of its activities and drafted a plan for the period 2013-2018 reflecting a new vision for the organization. This vision and strategic plan

were endorsed by the Group of Friends of the Alliance at its ministerial meeting held in September 2013. The Alliance continues to enjoy the support of the majority of Member States and of several international organizations belonging to its Group of Friends, which currently has 140 members. Its programming covers the pillar areas of media, youth, education and migration. Some projects cut across those areas and have multiple impacts.

32. During the reporting period, cutting-edge programming across all of the original pillars identified in the report of the High-level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations was continued. The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations embarked on a process of the evaluation and consolidation of programming and the completion of some projects. Activities in the areas of education and youth were expanded.

The Sixth Global Forum, Bali (29-30 August 2014)

33. The Bali Forum, under the theme "Unity in Diversity" brought together more than 1,200 participants from more than 100 countries. Heads of State, ministers, leaders of intergovernmental organizations, members of the business sector, academics, philanthropists, young people and members of the media discussed the importance of celebrating diversity in national and international contexts. The Secretary-General and the President of Indonesia addressed the opening session with calls for greater cooperation among and between cultures.

National and regional strategies

34. In April 2014, the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations reported on the importance of continuing efforts to develop national and regional strategies as evidence of commitment to the values of the Alliance. Emphasizing that regional strategies represented shared commitments across borders, the High Representative noted that the League of Arab States and Member States in Latin America had submitted new regional strategies to the Alliance.

Civil society recognition and capacity-building

35. The Alliance and the BMW Group continued their collaboration on the Intercultural Innovation Award. The Award recognizes innovative and sustainable projects around the world that are encouraging dialogue and cooperation among people from different cultural backgrounds using innovative and creative methods. Winners become members of the World Intercultural Facility for Innovation, a programme initiated by the Alliance that helps winners to become more efficient and to expand their projects. The Alliance and the BMW Group have renewed their partnership through the end of 2015. The expanded relationship allows for more advanced forms of training and mentorship for awardees, including one year of multiple workshops designed to build their capacity. The report on the support provided to the 2013 awardees shows that one year after winning the Award, 9 out of 10 organizations consolidated their work and considerably expanded their operations. The total number of project beneficiaries had increased from 117,620 to 219,348 by April 2014.

36. In 2013, the Alliance forged a partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to expand upon its original partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Education Arcade and Learning Games Network, which

resulted in the "Create UNAOC" challenge to support the development of mobile applications/games that promote intercultural dialogue. This competition for application developers was highly successful and is currently being refocused to emphasize applications that encourage users to learn more about intercultural dialogue as a means of conflict prevention. It will now be called "PeaceApp". Winners and five honourable mentions will be selected by an international jury, and the winning applications/games will be available for download.

37. The Alliance video competition, "PLURAL+", continued through another successful campaign, culminating in the 2013 Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity and Social Inclusion. Twenty-five videos were selected by the international jury and PLURAL+ partner organizations. The selected videos were presented at the awards ceremony at the Paley Centre for Media (December 2013) and have since been distributed across the world in a variety of platforms.

Peace education for youth

38. The Alliance summer school underwent a significant change in 2013 through the Alliance's public/private partnership with Education First, a Switzerland-based for-profit education corporation. Education First provided both financial resources and the use of its campus in Tarrytown, United States of America, so that the Alliance could bring the summer school closer to United Nations Headquarters. A total of 175 participants from more than 100 countries benefited from an evolving curriculum focused on peace education, and met high-level United Nations officials.

39. During the 2013 edition of the Youth Solidarity Fund project, the Alliance selected 16 awardees among youth-led organizations based in the Middle East, North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Project activities started in July 2013 and continued through February 2014. They included awareness-raising campaigns using media and advocacy with local governments and religious leaders. Whenever applicable and relevant, youth clubs were registered or partnership agreements between youth-led organizations and other partners were concluded in an effort to institutionalize relations and bring more ownership and sustainability to the projects. From July 2013 to February 2014, more than 29,000 young people and adults directly benefited from the projects.

40. The Alliance provided technical support to each youth-led organization by reviewing awareness-raising materials and substantive documents. It also hired a public relations firm to support the communication needs of the organizations, including through the web and social media.

Media programming on migration

41. In October 2013, the Alliance designed a project entitled "Tracking Hatred: Intolerance and Hate Speech in European and Middle Eastern and North African Media". The goal of the project is to understand and combat the harmful effects of hate speech and intolerant ideas that develop and spread through the media, specifically in Europe and the Middle East and North Africa region. The project includes the launch of a comprehensive study of the media in three countries in the Middle East and three in Europe, and the subsequent implementation of a series of activities aimed at raising awareness and providing possible solutions. The timeline for project implementation will be decided once partners have been identified and funding has been secured.

42. In July 2014, in partnership with Panos Institute Europe and with the support of the Open Society Foundations, the Alliance produced the "Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration", a compendium of terms to assist journalists in covering migration issues through specific and accurate language. This was done at the request of writers and editors who had participated in previous Alliance events. The tool addresses the need to educate journalists to report with precision, using appropriate terminology, in print and audiovisual media. The Glossary was compiled through the work of a scientific committee composed of eight international civil society organizations working on different yet complementary aspects of migration.

Fellowship programme

43. The Alliance held two fellowship classes in 2013. In late June, fellows from North Africa and the Middle East participated in a programme that included meetings in New York, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Berlin, Brussels and Paris over a period of two weeks. The class was composed of 12 fellows from 9 Arab countries and included meetings with high-level representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as well as civil society personalities.

44. The second class, held for two weeks in November 2013, enabled 12 fellows from seven North American and European countries to participate in a programme of meetings held in Jordan, Morocco and Qatar. Their agenda included meetings with officials of the All Jordan Youth Commission, members of the Moroccan Parliament, British Council students from universities in Casablanca and Fez, Morocco, local non-governmental organizations, political activists and journalists from Al Jazeera.

45. In addition, the Alliance invited 10 alumni of the fellowship programme to New York in October 2013 to develop an engagement strategy and identify tangible deliverables for the period 2013-2015.

Interreligious dialogue

46. In November 2013, the High Representative took part in major conferences in Vienna hosted by Religions for Peace and the King Abdullah bin Abdelaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. The Alliance also worked with the Policy and Mediation Division of the United Nations Department of Political Affairs to build relationships with civil society actors active in the area of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and to develop a network that could inform the work of the United Nations.

IV. Other United Nations system activities in support of the culture of peace

47. At the intergovernmental level, in September 2013 and 2014 the President of the General Assembly convened a one-day High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, in pursuance of Assembly resolutions 67/106 and 68/125.

Peacebuilding Support Office

48. In accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 68/125, the Peacebuilding Commission has continued to advance a culture of peace and non-violence in post-conflict peacebuilding efforts at the country level. During the reporting period, the Commission enhanced its role in advancing an integrated and coherent approach to peacebuilding activities in the six countries on its agenda.

49. The Commission's advisory, advocacy and political accompaniment roles enhanced the coherence of international engagement in the countries on its agenda and encouraged dialogue among national stakeholders. Furthermore, in recognition of the important role played by women in peacebuilding, the Commission integrated a gender dimension into its work during the reporting period, in particular in the areas of economic revitalization and national reconciliation.

50. The Commission also supported the efforts of the Peacebuilding Fund, managed by the Peacebuilding Support Office to foster coherence and collective engagement with a wide range of community-level groups, including traditional, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. In Guinea, the Commission and the Fund (with a contribution of $2.7 million) supported the work of the preliminary Reflection Commission on National Reconciliation created by the President. In support of the Liberian Strategic Road Map for National Healing and Reconciliation, Peacebuilding Fund funding was provided to UNDP and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights for the implementation of a community-based truth-telling and atonement project. The "palava huts" are aimed at promoting community-based healing and reconciliation through the public disclosure and acknowledgement of human rights violations committed during the civil war, with a view to overcoming social, political and religious cleavages.

51. In Kyrgyzstan, unity in diversity is recognized as a centrepiece of peacebuilding in the wake of the political crisis. Through a project of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with Peacebuilding Fund funding, the country is promoting multilingualism in the country to foster an environment conducive to broader integration, especially of minorities. The project approach encourages the participation of a broad spectrum of society to encourage all ethnic groups in Kyrgyzstan to speak the state language in addition to learning their mother tongues, knowing more about the country's various cultures and becoming more aware of the rights of minorities, and encourages their participation in public life on an equal footing.

United Nations Volunteers

52. United Nations Volunteers has increased its support for peace operations. As of June 2014, 2,818 volunteers were deployed on the ground in 10 peacekeeping missions and 7 special political missions. In promoting social cohesion and resilience in post-conflict areas, United Nations Volunteers assigned to United Nations missions helped to mobilize local volunteers within communities by supporting inclusive and rights-based dialogue and intercommunity engagement. Additionally, by strengthening its partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Volunteers has renewed its focus on community dialogue between refugees and host communities and given voice to displaced or repatriated communities. In post-conflict environments experiencing

severe capacity deficits, which hamper the delivery of peace dividends, United Nations Volunteers has supported the work of United Nations and national development partners in strengthening local governance structures as part of wider peacebuilding interventions.

53. United Nations Volunteers is currently working to define innovative projects in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The recent approval of the United Nations Volunteers global programme on volunteerism support for peacebuilding is the direct outcome of this ambitious effort, which seeks to increase the role of communities in sustaining peace and strengthening the capacities of local populations. To do so, United Nations Volunteers is partnering with many other United Nations entities in projects aimed at promoting access to justice and civic education, engaging adolescents in peacebuilding activities and promoting youth education on the culture of peace in several African countries emerging from conflict or in a delicate political transition.

54. United Nations Volunteers intends to work specifically on social inclusion as a foundation of peace in this strategic framework period. Projects will be focused on promoting human rights and supporting the establishment of networks of community monitors facilitated by information and communications technology. This will be done by drawing on both on-site United Nations Volunteers and the assets of the organization's Online Volunteering Service. In addition, United Nations Volunteers is committed to working with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other partners to implement the Seven-Point Action Plan on Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding.

UN-Women

55. UN-Women is promoting a culture of peace through many of its programmes and activities in 96 countries (in 2013) and through global normative development. In particular, it partners with other United Nations entities to raise awareness of women's peacebuilding initiatives. For example, in September 2014, together with the Peacebuilding Support Office, UN-Women hosted an event offering a platform enabling women from across the world to share their peacebuilding stories, which will be compiled in a joint publication entitled "Women: everyday peacebuilders".

56. Through its programming on gender-responsive peacebuilding, UN-Women amplifies the voices of women in peace activities and facilitates their access to peace and security decision-making. For example, UN-Women supports women's peace coalitions in countries including Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. In Liberia, the "peace hut" mechanism allows local women leaders to mediate and resolve local and domestic conflicts before they escalate into violence. In the peace huts, now numbering 17 in rural areas, women leaders are also referring survivors to services, maintaining liaison with local police through a mobile phone hotline and engaging in local peacebuilding efforts. In selected communities in South Sudan, UN-Women has supported women's empowerment centres at which sexual and gender-based violence prevention activities and referrals take place. In Haiti, Liberia, Timor-Leste and Uganda, UN-Women is supporting local organizations in building referral services and networks for survivors to ensure that they receive reproductive health care, access to justice, livelihood support and psychosocial counselling.

United Nations University

57. United Nations University (UNU) has promoted intercultural dialogue through the work of its specialized institute in this area, the Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility.[9]

58. Through its research programme on migration, media and intercultural dialogue, as well as reports and papers, UNU carries out studies on intercultural dialogue as an issue involving both inter-state and societal practices. Recommendations are drawn from these studies on how best to conduct intercultural dialogue in order to ensure that it will bear fruit in society. Research has also highlighted that intercultural dialogue is, first and foremost, linked to the framework of activities related to the agenda on international security and counter-terrorism. Academic literature on these issues illustrates how terrorism and counter-terrorism activities are mutually influencing factors: the way political leaders and media frame the discourse on terrorism could also shape both counter-terrorist action and the reactions of actors responsible for new threats.

59. The Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility held an academic conference during the reporting period and publishes a periodic academic journal, *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture*, to promote debate in this area among academics, members of civil society and cultural practitioners.

60. The Institute developed the "open forum" format to bring together stakeholders, academics and members of the public to debate questions of dialogue across cultural differences. It has also held events for immigrant journalists and for local and immigrant authors. The Institute has observed the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development and the International Day for Tolerance with debates and seminars, and has produced a series of audiovisual "dialogues" examining questions of migration and culture (see http://gcm.unu.edu). Finally, the Institute has produced a film, *Three Violins*, that examines the role of music in intercultural dialogue in the context of urban migration.

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

61. The contribution of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in support of the global movement to promote a culture of peace is focused on efforts to enhance the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions — from the grass-roots to the policy level — to prevent and resolve violent conflicts and build sustainable peace. UNITAR work is focused on strengthening skills in the areas of conflict analysis, interest-based negotiation, mediation and reconciliation, including through "deep listening" skills and effective communication across cultures and generations.

62. Seminars among senior peacemakers and other practitioners facilitate the exchange of knowledge and practice to address root causes of violent conflicts and guide future efforts. Other learning-related events develop the potential of young people to contribute constructively to peacebuilding processes. UNITAR also supports active youth involvement in peacebuilding processes. Online learning opportunities, such as the online course entitled "Strengthening civilian capacities to protect civilians from violence", jointly developed by UNITAR and Nonviolent

[9] See http://gcm.unu.edu.

Peaceforce, provide an overview of key strategies aimed at preventing the escalation of violent conflicts, providing direct physical protection to civilians in a variety of contexts and strengthening local peace mechanisms.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

63. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has increased its involvement in the promotion of intercultural dialogue through an active role played during the recent Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations held in Bali. FAO is now set to formalize its membership in the Group of Friends of the Alliance.

64. Hunger must be tackled from various sides, including through the provision of food that belongs to the culture of a people. While today 80 per cent of our diet is based on four commodities (wheat, rice, maize and soybeans), humanity has used more than 7,000 products that have formed the basis of human diets and cultures. Recovering these lost products and bringing this diversity back into diets are major challenges that FAO seeks to address.

65. FAO has also been promoting cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding through South-South cooperation. Through its efforts, FAO is helping to break the vicious circle of food insecurity and conflict.

United Nations Department of Public Information

66. The United Nations Department of Public Information deploys its various resources, including its global network of United Nations information centres, to raise awareness about the International Day of Peace on 21 September, whose theme was the "Right of peoples to peace" in 2014. Several United Nations Messengers of Peace were involved in celebrating the Day. In addition, some 500 students from the United States and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (through a videolink with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) participated in a conference with the Secretary-General and Messengers of Peace on the subject of peace. In India, the United Nations Information Centre in New Delhi organized a celebration for some 300 students from 22 schools, who celebrated the Day with speeches, songs, dance performances and plays.

67. The United Nations Information Centre in Manama provided communications support for an international conference entitled "All civilizations in service of humanity", held in Bahrain from 5 to 7 May. The conference brought together 300 religious figures and scholars from more than 80 countries to promote messages of peace and religious understanding, and the Centre disseminated key messages in Arabic and other languages.

68. The Department provided media coverage of the High-level Forum of the General Assembly on the Culture of Peace, the special event marking the International Day of Non-Violence and events marking World Interfaith Harmony Week. United Nations news platforms also covered messages by senior United Nations officials in support of the Day of Vesak and the International Day of Nowruz. Through the Chinese-language weibo social media accounts of the United Nations, the Department was able to disseminate United Nations messages on the Day of Vesak to some 6 million followers worldwide.

69. Combating intolerance and promoting a culture of peace represent one of the 10 core principles of the United Nations Academic Impact initiative. "Music for Peace" is an ongoing Academic Impact series that brings musicians to the United Nations to discuss the role that music can play in promoting a culture of peace. In 2013, "Music for Peace" held a student-focused special event featuring a performance by five musicians from Sierra Leone who grew up in a refugee camp.

70. In observance of Nelson Mandela International Day (18 July), United Nations Radio produced a video about the value of reconciliation and dialogue among peoples. Around the world, in activities led by United Nations information centres, the Organization partnered with non-governmental organizations, South African embassies and others to celebrate reconciliation under the theme "Take action, inspire change!" In Dakar, more than 400 people attended a panel discussion on how Mr. Mandela's legacy could be used to resolve conflicts in Africa. In Brazzaville, volunteers devoted 67 minutes — representing 1 minute for every year of public service by Mr. Mandela — to painting the wall of a public school.

71. For the twentieth commemoration of the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide, the Department organized a series of events under the theme "Kwibuka: remember — unite — renew", with a series of video interviews on genocide and reconciliation recorded and disseminated.

V. Promoting interreligious dialogue through cooperation with faith-based organizations

72. The United Nations system promotes interreligious dialogue by engaging with faith-based organizations and involving them in its policy and advocacy activities. Such activities bring together peoples of different faiths to enable them to find solutions to common issues, such as those related to maternal health, violence against women and HIV/AIDS.

United Nations Population Fund

73. In its capacity as convenor of the *United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-based Organizations for the Millennium Development Goals*, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) hosted a policy round table for donors, on "Religion and development post-2015" in May 2014. Discussions were focused on partnerships around the Millennium Development Goals, and related policy implications of religion for the post-2015 sustainable development goals. Highlights of the consultation included cautions about the homogenization of religious entities, the potential for mutual "instrumentalization", and continued concerns about some faith-based positions concerning human rights and gender equality.

74. Various policy recommendations were made, including: building on the successful partnership experiences of service delivery, targeted advocacy, mediation and conflict management; and identifying the respective strengths of partnerships between the United Nations and faith-based organizations on the basis of available evidence, while also ensuring more targeted research about emerging religio-political trends affecting humanitarian aid and development and (re)considering the capacities and modalities of the involvement of faith-based organizations in the new aid architecture.

75. In various regions and countries, UNFPA continues its legacy of partnership with faith-based organizations through advocacy, capacity-building, knowledge management and strengthened South-South cooperation on population issues, including a multimillion-dollar investment, in partnership with UNICEF, to reduce female genital mutilation/cutting in 17 countries and end child marriage.

76. For example, in the Asian region, UNFPA Afghanistan successfully advocated with 122 religious leaders to gain their active endorsement of family planning and their signature of a declaration of commitment to that end. In Nepal, UNFPA supports the ongoing mobilization and training of more than 300 religious leaders to combat child marriage and harmful practices. These trained leaders promote interreligious dialogue and healthful practices in their communities and partner with the media.

77. In the Philippines, UNFPA works with the Interfaith Partnership for the Promotion of Responsible Parenthood, comprising major Protestant, evangelical and other churches and representatives from Muslim and indigenous communities, to advocate the adoption and implementation of a reproductive health policy. In line with the government's peace and development agreement in the Autonomous Region Muslim Mindanao, UNFPA is building the capacity of senior officials of the Bangsamoro Development Agency to integrate reproductive health and family planning into the health sector plan.

78. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office of UNFPA continues to engage with faith-based organizations and indigenous and Afro-descendants' networks to advocate quality accessible reproductive health services. Most noteworthy is the role of the Latin American Council of Churches, articulated clearly in a flagship document entitled "Consensus of Havana" that was approved by more than 250 members and delegates of the Council on 22 May 2013.

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

79. In 2014, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has intensified activities in five key areas: leadership and advocacy; support aimed at scaling up service provision by faith-based organizations and integrating it into national responses; addressing human rights challenges; combating stigma and discrimination; and addressing sensitive issues such as sexuality and gender-based violence in the context of HIV.

80. The approaches of this partnership include convening consultations of religious leaders and technical partners at the national level, addressing gatherings of high-level religious leaders and inviting them to engage in dialogue with UNAIDS staff, writing joint opinion pieces and leveraging high-level events on critical issues. For example, following a UNAIDS-organized national consultation, religious leaders in Ethiopia issued a call for the inclusion of equitable access to HIV treatment for all in the targets of the post-2015 development framework.

81. In October and November 2013, the Executive Director of UNAIDS gave the keynote address at the tenth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in the Republic of Korea. Following bilateral meetings, three senior religious leaders scripted and filmed World AIDS Day messages in which they spoke out against gender-based violence, using gender-transformative language, and challenged the

negative stereotyping of men and boys that is so often sanctioned by religious and cultural traditions.

82. Another approach is to develop tools and resource materials, such as the Framework for Dialogue, to support interaction among networks of religious leaders, people living with HIV and key populations at the national level. For example, a dialogue with faith-based leaders at the eleventh International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, held in November 2013, provided a unique opportunity for prominent and supportive faith-based leaders in the region to engage in dialogue with men who have sex with men and transgender people to foster greater understanding and trust.

83. UNAIDS has also helped support the scaling-up of faith-based health services and their integration into national responses. For example, religious leaders in the Middle East and North Africa region have actively participated in the consultations on the development of the Arab AIDS Strategy (2014-2020) endorsed by the Council of Arab Ministers of Health under the umbrella of the League of Arab States. The guiding principles of the strategy document included leveraging the constructive roles of culture and religion in shaping the HIV response at the national and regional levels.

UN-Women

84. In Nepal, UN-Women supported the formation of a national interreligious network to combat violence against women. Religious leaders were brought together with peace activists, advocates of the rights of migrant women workers, and male leaders from the MenEngage alliance against gender-based violence to participate in awareness-raising activities. This inter-faith network worked at the district level to fight for social justice for Muslim and Madhesi women.

85. The Entity's partnership with Religions for Peace India, included global, Internet-based advocacy to end violence against women. In South Asia, UN-Women has been working with faith-based organizations comprising Buddhist monks, Hindu priests and Muslim maulvis to address the challenge of the trafficking of children and women. For example, Muslim leaders in Bihar, India, chose to devote one Friday per month to raising awareness of child trafficking and gender inequality. In Rwanda, UN-Women supported an organization of the Presbyterian Church in training more than 400 Catholic, Muslim and Protestant leaders in all 30 districts of the country regarding the role of religious leaders in promoting the participation of women in decision-making. In the Balkans, UN-Women has encouraged faith leaders to promote women's rights and combat gender-based violence.

VI. A rights-based approach to the promotion of peace and intercultural and interreligious dialogue

86. The United Nations human rights machinery promotes a culture of peace and dialogue from various angles.

The right to peace

87. OHCHR continued to provide substantive support to the open-ended intergovernmental working group on a draft United Nations declaration on the right to peace. In June 2014, the working group considered a new draft text in which

reference was made to the supreme importance of practicing tolerance, dialogue, cooperation and solidarity as means to promote world peace through human rights.

88. The Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order formulated a set of concrete recommendations on the draft text, with the ultimate objective of elucidating the links between peace and human rights. In his interim report of 7 August 2014 (A/69/272), the Independent Expert explored the idea that the universal realization of self-determination could be understood as a vector of peace and part of a democratic and equitable world order.

89. The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief initiated several interreligious dialogues, specifically in follow-up to his previous visits to countries affected by protracted conflicts. On 12 September 2013, he took part in the first interreligious round table in Cyprus, organized by the Office of the Religious Track of the Cyprus Peace Process, under the auspices of the Embassy of Sweden and in cooperation with OHCHR. This led to several significant steps towards enhancing the enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief on the whole island, including with regard to access to and the restoration of places of worship, and in February 2014 the religious leaders of Cyprus issued a joint statement on the resumption of peace talks.[10]

90. From 15 to 18 May 2014, the Special Rapporteur conducted a follow-up mission to the Republic of Moldova, including a visit to the Transnistrian region, during which he participated in round tables with representatives of religious communities and civil society organizations on both banks of the River Dniester. While acknowledging a marked improvement in the communication climate in Chisinau, he reiterated the importance of ensuring that there were no human rights protection gaps in the country.

91. In Kyrgyzstan, OHCHR will undertake a number of activities to promote a culture of peace and dialogue. First, it plans to complete an overview of measures to ensure the rights of minorities and their participation in public life and to raise the awareness of civil society regarding the State concept regarding inter-ethnic relations. Then, it plans to conduct training on human rights protection and conflict mitigation for groups of lawyers from multi-ethnic areas and to hold a national conference on justice mechanisms to address human rights violations committed during the violence of June 2010.

Cultural rights

92. In two recent reports, the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights addressed the issue of historical and memorial narratives in divided societies, in relation to history textbooks (A/68/296) and to memorials and museums of history/memory (A/HRC/25/49). She noted that education policies relating to history teaching failed to acknowledge cultural diversity and the multiplicity of historical narratives between and within communities, and that memorialization processes could constitute an obstacle to reconciliation, paving the way for revenge in the future. She recommended that history teaching and memorial practices foster critical thought, analytical learning and debate, open spaces to a variety of narratives regarding the past and representations thereof, and ensure a better

[10] See www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=13880&LangID=E and www.swedenabroad.com/ImageVaultFiles/id_18049/cf_52/Joint_communique.PDF.

understanding of the contemporary challenges of exclusion and violence. By its resolution 25/19, the Human Rights Council decided to hold at its twenty-seventh session, a panel discussion on history teaching and memorialization processes with a view to, inter alia, contributing to the sharing of good practices in this area.

Indigenous rights

93. OHCHR supported the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the preparation of its study on access to justice in the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples (see A/HRC/27/65). While the study addresses a broad array of issues pertaining to access to justice for indigenous peoples, a significant portion of its content is devoted to the contributions of indigenous legal systems and restorative justice processes to peace and reconciliation, including the role of truth commissions. In addition, through its annual Indigenous Fellowship Programme, OHCHR offers indigenous women and men an opportunity to gain substantive knowledge on the United Nations system and its human rights instruments and mechanisms.

Other mechanisms

94. The work of human rights mechanisms on racial discrimination and minority rights is also highly relevant in this context, in particular as it relates to combating racist hate speech, promoting intercultural education and guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities through the promotion of interreligious dialogue. These issues have been actively promoted by both OHCHR and special procedures mandate holders.

VII. Conclusion

95. **The present report demonstrates the commitment of a large number of United Nations entities to the promotion of a culture of peace in the broad sense of the word. It also reveals the interconnectedness between the culture of peace and interreligious and intercultural dialogue, calling for an increasingly integrated approach on the part of the entities of the United Nations system to these problems, particularly in their activities at the field level.**